

# THE RHUMB LINE

September, 1995

## From Maine Maritime Museum

### Museum Acquires Peale Portrait

An important and rare ship's captain's portrait by the famed Philadelphia artist James Peale (1749-1831) has been acquired by Maine Maritime Museum.

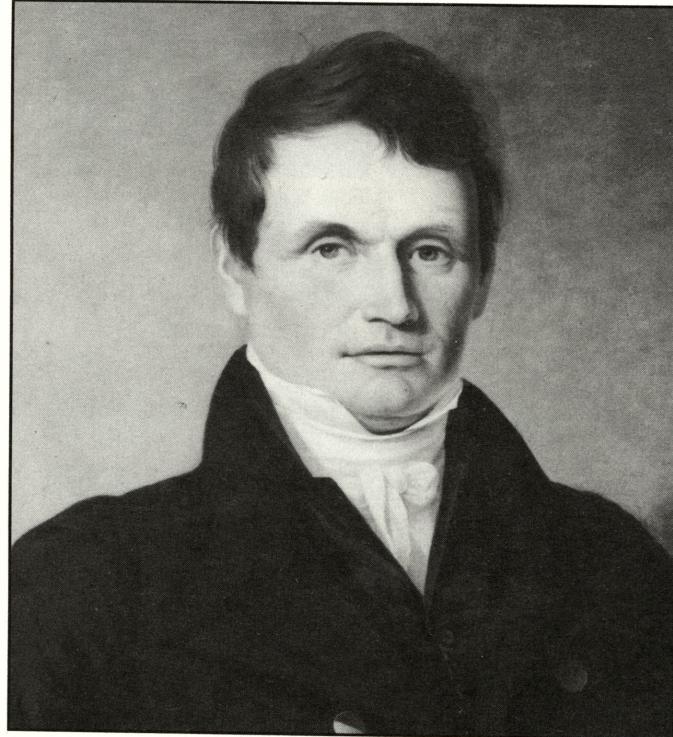
The 36-inch by 28-inch oil painting, executed by Peale in 1822, depicts Captain Moses Owen, a Bath, Maine sea captain. It descended through the Owen, Ledyard and Baecker families of Bath and Brunswick, and was acquired for the historic collections of the Museum through the generosity of long-time Museum friend and trustee Elizabeth B. Noyce.

"This portrait of Captain Owen is another cornerstone strengthening our ability to tell the story of the maritime history of Maine," Curator Robert Webb said. "Its coming here demonstrates the public confidence that we are capable and worthy of caring for and interpreting the world's best maritime-related art."

An unsigned companion portrait of Captain Owen's wife Mary Hagan was obtained with the Peale portrait.

The Museum acquired the paintings for an undisclosed price. They are the latest in a series of major acquisitions made possible by Mrs. Noyce, including a large portrait of the Maine-built clipper ship *Warner* rounding Cape Horn by James Buttersworth, and a portrait of the clipper ship *Great Admiral* entering San Francisco Bay by Charles Robert Patterson.

The artist was brother of Charles Willson Peale and uncle to Charles' famous sons Raphaelle, Rembrandt and Titian Peale, all part of the artistic Peale family celebrated in Philadelphia and by a museum devoted to their



Captain Moses Owen by James Peale

art in Baltimore, Maryland.

Captain Owen was a shipmaster in the early days of American international commerce by sea. Maine Maritime Museum has several important artifacts relating to his career, including the figurehead from one of his commands, the snow *Clarissa Ann* of Bath. This figurehead is the oldest surviving example of such a shipcarving from a Maine-built vessel. Another vessel commanded by Owen, the snow *Minerva*, is the subject of the oldest painting of a Bath-built ship in the museum's collections. It dates from about 1810.

The painting is currently undergoing conservation examination. Webb expects it to be on view soon in the Museum's principal exhibition, *A Maritime History of Maine*.

## From The Chart Table

Labor day has come and gone. The breeze is more often out of the north these days. Summer is still very much in the eye however and our waterfront is nicely populated.

The Museum had a fine summer with tours, boat excursions, shipyard demonstrations, visiting wind ships and as many people as ever.

As can be seen elsewhere on these pages, the Museum is the richer for some major donations to its collections. We have reached a milestone in the organization of the Sewall papers. One can also preview the fall schedule and note we are as busy as usual.

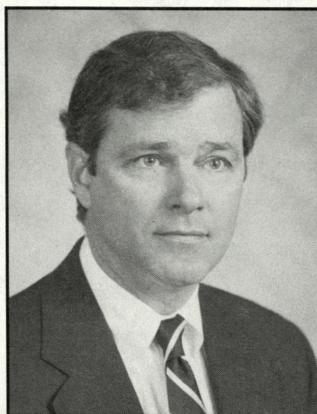
We are doing some belt-tightening to ensure our continued health and viability, one consequence of which is the elimination some of our full-time positions. This is always a painful process and one which is not expected to be repeated any time soon.

We continue to refine plans for the future – about which we will report more about at a later date.

In the meanwhile, I affirm our standing invitation to come and visit. Drop by for a chat or, if you come on October 28th, bring your old clothes and join the Quartermasters. I look forward to seeing you here.

*Tom*

Thomas R. Wilcox, Jr.  
Executive Director



Tom Wilcox

## Sewall Family Papers

Maine Maritime Museum has completed processing the Sewall Family Papers, probably the largest non-government nineteenth-century shipping collection in North America, into an organized collection which successfully and completely charts the history of an important Maine shipbuilding family.

Over much of the course of a two-year federal grant, Project Archivist Elizabeth S. Maule created a framework for approximately 450,000 individual paper items, which were donated to the Museum as a collection in 1991 and 1992, and wrote an inventory guide for research of the family and its companies and vessels.

The primary focus of the Sewall Family Papers is nineteenth-century shipbuilding and ship management. Extensive material on the construction of sailing vessels from the 1820s-1903, primarily in the form of accounts for materials, insurance, and labor, is included. Some plans have survived, and the Museum collections contain several half-hull models. There is also material on purchasing timber and transporting it to Bath, conversion of the yard to steel construction in 1892-1893, fitting out the new vessels.

The Sewall Family Papers cover the years 1761 to 1937 and fill 634 boxes or 303 shelf feet. On the whole, the Papers are in amazingly good condition and appear to be relatively complete. The collection's greatest strength is in its sheer magnitude: everything was saved.

The processing of the Sewall Family Papers and the preparation of the inventory have been made possible largely through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, a granting arm of the National Archives. Copies of the 538-page inventory may be purchased from the Museum's Library.

# Visitor Experience Emphasized

The Apprenticeshop has recently been renamed The Boatshop, signaling a new direction for the Museum. The Boatshop will no longer operate as a school, instead it will redouble its present means of preserving and interpreting the art of wooden boatbuilding and of restoring the Museum's historic boat collection.

The Museum's strategic plan calls for a boatbuilding capacity which will contribute three things: 1) an educational experience; 2) an enhancement of the visitor experience; 3) the conservation and restoration of collection boats. Director Tom Wilcox says, "Regrettably, the educational program that we've attempted over the past years has not permitted us to do as good a job as we'd like for our historic boat collection and for our visitors. Therefore, in lieu of a direct educational program involving students, we are going to do a first rate job working on our collection and educating the visiting public."

The Boatshop will allow the Museum to better provide visitors a better, close-up view of actual boatbuilding and restoration and is expected to result in a dramatically improved visitor experience and a giant stride toward restoring the historic boat collection. The Boatshop will be filled with sights, sounds and smells of boatbuilding as new construction and restoration projects are underway, preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting traditional boatbuilding skills.

The boatbuilding staff will be primarily responsible for restoring boats in the historic collection, building new craft, and maintaining in-water boats in Bristol fashion.



## MMM Wish List

- ✓ \$ to help cover the cost of a new telephone system
- ✓ Interesting old furniture (carts, crates, etc.) for display use in the Museum Shop
- ✓ A 2-step stool with safety handle for reaching archival boxes on the top Library shelves
- ✓ Old films/videos relating to Maine's maritime history and coastal life: ship- & boatbuilding, fishing, naval vessels, etc.
- ✓ Paper shredder
- ✓ Oversized shelving to store large documents and photographs (can be purchased for about \$700 from Global or Arrow Star distributors)
- ✓ Cassette player for use in education programs
- ✓ N.Y. Maritime Register on microfilm (can be purchased from the Philadelphia Maritime Museum )
- ✓ Clean cloth diapers for curatorial object cleaning
- ✓ 4' x 6' nylon American flag with 9' pole

If you wish to donate, please call Ruth at 443-1316.

# Fall Boatshop Workshops at MMM

September 30

Re-canvassing Your Canoe

Rollin Thurlow, owner and operator of Northwoods Canoe Company in Dover-Foxcroft, will teach the skills necessary for participants to work on their own canoes during the winter and be paddling by springtime.

Mr. Thurlow will teach students how to prepare the hull and to fill the weave of the canvas, and will spend time discussing restoration techniques and various boat finishes. During the workshop, two canoes will be re-canvassed.

Regarded as one of Maine's finest craftsmen, Mr. Thurlow is the author of *The Wood and Canvas Canoe*, now considered the definitive work on the subject.

October 14

Marine Mechanics

Bill Sweetman will lead this workshop, focusing mainly on diesel engines. Participants will learn about routine maintenance, fuel injection and cooling systems and how to troubleshoot common problems. Mr. Sweetman is owner/operator of Orr's Island Boat Works and has worked in and taught engine mechanics for more than forty years. This workshop is scheduled from 8:30 - 2:30 p.m.; all materials will be provided.

October 28

Sail Maintenance & Repair

Win Fowler from Shore Sails in Yarmouth will share his sailmaking & repair secrets in this workshop. The program will begin with an explanation of sail engineering – how sails are assembled in terms of design, modern materials and construction techniques. Mr. Fowler will then demonstrate principles of basic sail maintenance – how to look for and deal with the common sail problems of dirt, UV degradation and chafe; how to take care of major problems until the sailmaker comes: stitches, tears, hardware, corners; and how to assemble a useful sail repair kit.

November 4 & 5

Half-Hull Modeling

In this workshop, Arno Day will lead students through the process of building his/her own half-model.

Since retiring in 1983, Mr. Day has taught the craft of boatbuilding, working at Wooden Boat School in Brooklin and running seminars on various boat-related topics. The Day family has built boats in the Penobscot Bay area for 150 years.

This program runs from 8-5 both Saturday and Sunday. Cost is \$100.00 for members and \$130.00 for non-members, including all materials. Students will need to bring some tools; a list will be provided upon registration.

*All workshops, unless otherwise noted, will take place in the Boatshop from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Cost for each workshop is \$45.00 members, \$60.00 nonmembers. Reservations are required; please call (207)443-1316.*

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## Fall Lecture Series at MMM

Tuesday, September 26

7:00 p.m.

Sarah Cavanaugh, crew member from America<sup>3</sup>, will present a lecture on the "History of the America's Cup"

Tuesday, October 3

7:00 p.m.

Neil Depaoli: "The Eastern Frontier & The Atlantic Trade: A Case Study of Pemaquid, Maine, 1628-1689"

Tuesday, October 10

7:00 p.m.

Ann Webster: "Seguin Lighthouse Station-200 Years"

Tuesday, October 17

7:00 p.m.

Ken Black: "Lighthouses Along the Coast of Maine"

Tuesday, October 24

7:00 p.m.

Dave Mishkin: "Taking Care of Your Family Photographs & Documents"

*All lectures will be held in Sewall Hall. Cost is \$5 for members; \$6 for non-members. Desserts & coffee will be served. Pre-registration is suggested; please call 443-1316 to make reservations.*

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## Become A Quartermaster!

Semi-Annual Quartermasters' Day:

Saturday, October 28

We have formed a group of dedicated Museum friends who are willing to contribute some much-needed and honorable manual labor to the Museum & Shipyard grounds upkeep.

The first meeting on May 13 produced invaluable accomplishments & untold good times. October 28 is your last chance to join the charter team! Call Ruth Maschino at (207)443-1316 to sign on.



This could be you at the October 28, 1995 Quartermasters' Day!

## 1995 Fall Foliage Trips Aboard *Summertime*

### Saturday, September 16 – Boothbay Harbor & Lighthouses

In the clear fall air, lighthouses stand out at their photographic best. For this cruise, we expect the crowds will be gone from Boothbay Harbor, so passengers can get a sense of the quiet beauty of this famous Maine tourist mecca – without most of the tourists! You'll have an hour and a half to stroll and shop quietly on your own. An added bonus will be seeing the early foliage changes along the lower Kennebec and Sasanoa Rivers.

### Sunday, September 24 – Merrymeeting Bay and Richmond

Fabled Merrymeeting Bay is a major stopping place for wildfowl on their fall and spring migrations. Perhaps there will be geese and ducks resting here and feeding on the abundant wild rice at the confluence of the five rivers. You'll learn about the history of settlements and industries around the Bay area and about efforts to maintain the endangered natural resources of this ecological jewel. *Summertime* will stop at the lovely town of Richmond, where you can enjoy your own picnic in the gazebo by the water or eat lunch at a local restaurant.

### Saturday, September 30 – Five Islands and Lobsters in the Fall

*Summertime* will travel down the sinuous Sasanoa River, past several old colonial settlements. Then it's out through Hell's Gate and Goose Rock Passage to the lower Sheepscot River and over to Fabled Five Islands for hot lobsters on the deck at the Georgetown Fisherman's Co-op. The return trip passes near fabled and picturesque Hendrick's Head light on Southport Island.

### Saturday, October 7 – Kennebec River Ice

Until the advent of artificial refrigeration, ice from the Kennebec River cooled the world. On this upriver foliage trip, to Richmond and Gardiner, we'll focus on the famous ice industry which stretched along the river from Phippsburg to Augusta. We'll investigate the sites of huge ice houses and remaining piers where schooners loaded the cold cargo, and hear stories about this nearly-forgotten industry.

### Saturday, October 14 – Lighthouses and Coastal Fall Foliage

Join us as we wind up the cruising season. This trip combines the best of our cruises with a garnish of foliage – lighthouses, rivers, bays, history, sea stories, and fall photo-ops galore. We'll see the Kennebec, Sasanoa, and Sheepscot Rivers; if the seas are friendly, we may even visit an island or two!

*Cruises cost \$23 for Museum members, \$25 for non-members. All trips leave from the Museum dock at 9:00 a.m., and return at 3:00 p.m. Please call (207)443-1316 to make reservations.*

## Museum Accepts Last American Clipper

Maine Maritime Museum has agreed to accept some artifactual remains of the Maine-built clipper ship *Snow Squall* from the Spring Point Museum in South Portland.

An as-yet undetermined portion of the vessel's bow section and a small group of related artifacts will be moved from South Portland to Bath. These represent part of the hulk which was recovered from Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, where the vessel had served for storage and shoring for a pier.

The *Snow Squall* Project, a conservation and documentation project begun by the Spring Point Museum, will be wound up. Photographic and written documentation will be transferred to the Library and Archives of Maine Maritime Museum.

The artifacts will be allowed to dry gradually and naturally in long-term storage. Museum Director Tom Wilcox and Curator Robert Webb have no current plans for exhibition but expect that the long-term payoff will be the interpretation of the ship's place in American maritime history.

The *Snow Squall* was one of four true clipper ships built in the South Portland shipyard of Cornelius Butler around 1850. The Museum owns an oil painting of *Snow Squall*'s near-sister clipper, the *Warner*, as painted by the eminent marine artist James Buttersworth.

The *Snow Squall* made several fast passages around Cape Horn between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans before being damaged near the Cape. Condemned in Port Stanley after arriving there in distress, the hull was soon stripped of fittings and used for cargo storage. In later years a pier was built over the midships section.

A team of divers and underwater archaeologists led by maritime historian Nick Dean and Dr. Fred Yalouris recovered a portion of the bow of the ship and returned it to South Portland during the 1980s.

## Museum Wins \$112,500 Grant

For the forth time since 1989, Maine Maritime Museum has been awarded a grant from the Institute of Museum Services to help support the costs of general operations.

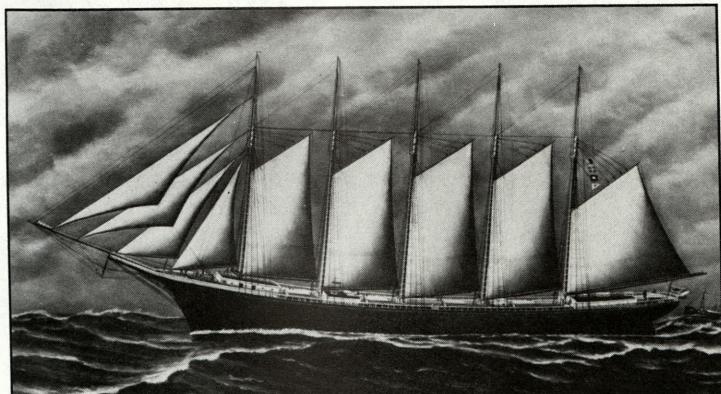
The grant provides \$112,500 to be disbursed over the course of two years, and will help to pay for various necessities, including an improved system of cataloging and storing artifacts and surveying visitors.

Maine Maritime Museum is one of 275 American museums (seven in Maine) which won IMS grants totalling \$22 million this year.

A bold painting of Percy & Small's schooner *Cora F. Cressy* by noted Boston marine artist S.F.M. Badger has been purchased for the museum's historic collections. MMM Trustees Charles Burden, Ned Harding, Henry Keene, Kenneth Kramer, Douglas Lee, Larry Polans and Henry Thomas have contributed support toward this important acquisition.

Badger's rendition, made in 1912 during the *Cressy*'s sailing career, shows her in heavy weather, passing the Nantucket Shoals lightship under reduced sail. The schooner's remains became part of a lobster pound in Bremen, Maine. Her trailboards, nameboard and half-model are on exhibit in Sewall Hall.

MMM photo by Bill King



# 1995 Fall Calendar of Events

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Saturday, September 16

★Boothbay Harbor & Lighthouses Cruise, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 19

★Kahurangi New Zealand Maori Dance Theatre will perform a workshop on Polynesian Navigation, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 24

★Cruise to Merrymeeting Bay and Richmond, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 26

★Lecture: Sarah Cavanaugh, crew member from America<sup>3</sup>, on the "History of the America's Cup," 7:00 p.m.

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newsletter by Kristen Pulkkinen

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243 Washington Street  
Bath, ME 04530

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